



# Illinois English Bulletin

Studies in the Teaching of English  
by  
The English Club of Greater Chicago

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## Studies in the Teaching of English

By The English Club of Greater Chicago

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We extend to our sister organization, The English Club of Greater Chicago, our congratulations on its fortieth anniversary.

Through the years we have enjoyed a close relationship with the English Club, many of whose members have not only belonged to IATE but have served as leaders in our councils and as participants on our programs. We invite all members of the English Club to join IATE and to share its enterprises for the improvement of English instruction.

This issue of the *Bulletin* records some of the most successful experiments and memorable achievements in the teaching of English in Chicago high schools. We appreciate the opportunity to share these studies with our members.

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### Forty Years

By ALICE BAUM

*Austin High School*

Having enjoyed through the years a close fellowship with the Illinois Association of Teachers of English, The English Club of Greater Chicago is pleased and gratified to celebrate its fortieth anniversary in this issue of the *Illinois Bulletin*.

A group of Chicago English teachers had met together for some years and had been represented at NCTE by James Hosisic and W. W. Hatfield prior to 1916. The war, bringing with it increased enrollment and a longer school day, caused the group to become inactive. In May, 1921, however, an impending convention of the National Council brought the group together again; and The English Club was inaugurated, with thirty charter members who elected Mrs. Lydia Trowbridge president and Miss Sophia Camenisch secretary-treasurer. The aims of the Club set forth at that time—"to bring together intellectually, professionally, and socially those interested in the art and craft of communication through the English language"—are still our aims today.

In September, 1921, the Club affiliated with NCTE and elected directors to the Council. In October of that year, eighty-four members looked forward to welcoming Council members to the convention. Now forty years later, three hundred members look back to last November when the Club welcomed the Council at its Golden Anniversary Convention.

As the Club grew in numbers and prestige, programs reflected the sensitivity of its members to their professional heritage as well as to current trends and problems in teaching materials and

methods. In planning the five programs each year, our aim has been to achieve variety and balance and to provide instruction, insight, and inspiration. Through the years we have been fortunate to procure such speakers as Rollo Lyman, Harry Hansen, Franklin Meine, Mitford Mathews, Frederick Faverty, Howard Vincent, Harold Allen, Ruth Strickland, and Joseph Mersand. The range of topics has been wide: Russian schools, current literary tendencies, structural linguistics, Anglo-American folk lore, creativity in adolescents, Mississippi River ballads, modern poetry, and American literature abroad, to name only a few. Through the generosity of the Kirkland Fund we were privileged to hear Carl Sandburg, Richard Wilbur, and T. S. Eliot.

The English Club supported the newly-established Goodman Theater and cooperated with such groups as The Friends of Literature, The Dickens Fellowship, The Library of International Relations, and Midwestern Writers, which for seven years sponsored a student writing project. During these fruitful years, members have evaluated books, suggested ways to encourage reading and writing, worked on curriculum, contributed to IATE programs and NCTE studies, and served on *The Chicago Schools Journal*.

Nothing has daunted the activity and enthusiasm of the loyal members of the Club. We look forward confidently to the next forty years.

### Team Teaching

By GRACE A. LINDAHL

*Senn High School*

In February, 1960, team teaching in English was initiated on an experimental basis at Senn High School. For several months previously, committee meetings of the school's administrators and team teachers had been held in order to plan the organization, course of study, and materials for the innovation. Since its introduction, the experiment in team teaching has continued; from experience, however, the original plans have been amplified and improved. At present, the department has two teams—one for a sophomore English class and another for a senior college preparatory English class. Both are twenty-week semester courses.

The purpose of the experiment is to bring about an improvement in instruction by flexibility in class size. A large group can be successfully handled in literature and in the teaching of grammar and language usage; a small group is needed for more individual instruction in composition. The following plan has therefore been adopted.



The organization of the two teams is similar. In sophomore English seventy-two students with three teachers participate. Thirty-six of the pupils are honor students, thirty-six of average ability. For ten weeks the teacher of literature has a class of thirty-six honor students; at the same period of the day the two teachers of composition, who will be referred to as teacher A and teacher B, have classes of eighteen pupils of average ability. At the end of the ten weeks, the thirty-six literature students are divided into two groups of eighteen and go to the small composition classes; the two composition groups are combined for ten weeks of literature. Since the honor students are kept together in both the literature and composition classes, homogeneous grouping is retained throughout the whole semester. The organization of the senior college preparatory English is the same as that of the sophomore English group; the difference is in the course of study.

A conference period has been added to the programs of the teachers of composition. Thus, the pupils receive individual help on their errors in writing.

#### **Comments of Sophomore English Team Teachers**

In discussing the technique of the sophomore writing class, composition teacher A outlined the following procedure. Many short compositions are written during the first three weeks. Errors in usage, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling are indicated on the papers. Always on every composition some encouraging comment is written. Grades are kept in the record book, but no grades are placed on the paper until the student has corrected and revised it. About the fourth week, work commences on the organization of a multiple-paragraph expository composition. Chapter two in *Learning to Write* by Smith, Paxton, Meserve (D. C. Heath, 1957), which is being used experimentally, is an excellent guide to organization. After a pupil has chosen a subject, he is asked to list twenty or thirty details about it. Then the teacher talks to each pupil to see if these details fall into certain large divisions. Most pupils find that a natural plan for organization evolves. The composition writing is done during the class period under the guidance of the teacher. In independent study outside of class the pupils use Blumenthal's *English 2600* (Harcourt, Brace, 1960). Objective tests on mechanics are given in class.

Both teachers of composition spoke of the importance of the conference period, teacher B telling of having the students read

their compositions aloud. Thus overused words become obvious. The student is encouraged to suggest a better word. Conferences also reveal a student's "muddled" thinking and help him to deal with the subject more logically.

The teacher of literature, who is teaching the novel to a class of thirty-six, declares literature can be taught successfully to such a group, especially to an honor group. Eager, well-prepared, interested in reading, anxious to hear the ideas of the other students, honor pupils find the study of the novel challenging. By concentrating upon only one literary form, the literature teacher on the sophomore team is able to achieve a greater unity of purpose.

In the literature class the students as a group study a few novels intensively, but they also read widely. The core novels are John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* and Edna Ferber's *Cimarron*. Class work centers upon analytical study of the plot and characters. Objective tests on the core novels are given in order to facilitate the grading of a large class. In wide reading a modification of the Rutgers Plan has been adopted for the purpose of experimentation. One day a week, half of the class goes to the library for supervised free reading; the other half remains with the teacher, who uses the time for a discussion of one of the core novels. The next day the groups reverse the procedure. The three days that the students are together are used for panel discussions, which have a thematic organization. In a ten week period, the honor students read from eight to ten novels.

#### Comments of the College Preparatory Team Teachers

The instructor of usage and literature states that team teaching works very well in the senior year, although it is better with the pupils in the honor group because they advance at a faster rate. For ten weeks a group of thirty-six seniors study grammar and language usage in a large class and read complete literary works outside the classroom. With this concentration on grammatical usage, the seniors obtain an analytical understanding of correct language. A list of reading selections, including novels, biographies, plays, short stories, and essays, is given to the pupils at the beginning of the course; weekly reports on 3 x 5 cards are required. Students are asked to state concisely the theme of the work and to make a general comment. The reading and reports are done outside the classroom.

For ten weeks these seniors, divided into two groups of eighteen, concentrate on composition study. Composition teacher A uses *Enjoying English Grade 12* by Wolfe and Geyer (L. W.



Singer Company, 1955); the chapter, "A Senior and His Problems," suggests excellent topics for compositions. Composition teacher B combines writing with the study of selected essays in *Great Essays*, edited by Houston Peterson (Washington Square Press, 1960); student essays in Chapter 17 of *Learning to Write*; and important current speeches. The thought, organization, and style of these essays and speeches are analyzed. Clarity and sincerity are emphasized in student writing. Outside the class, students work on Vis-Ed vocabulary cards (Visual Education Association, Dayton 2, Ohio).

#### Evaluation

Questions regarding the experiment are often asked. Is team teaching successful? What are the results? Although the team approach is not a panacea for all the problems in the teaching of English, some interesting advantages can be observed. Certain phases of the English curriculum can be successfully taught in a large group; and, an equitable pupil-teacher ratio being retained, other parts of the curriculum can be taught in two small groups. The students appreciate the individual assistance received in composition. A unity and singleness of purpose can be achieved by concentrating on one major division of English for a ten-week period. Instructors can, in many instances, teach the area of work in which they are most interested. The students find that having two teachers with their varying personalities and viewpoints is stimulating. Lastly, teachers working together and exchanging ideas gain satisfaction and inspiration from sharing their techniques. Team teaching brings greater creativity.

One year ago, one group at Senn had team teaching; at present, two groups have the team organization. In the last year new methods have gradually been introduced to improve the quality of the work. It is hoped that additional experimentation and creative development will continue.

#### Westward Ho! A Library-Teaching Activity

By FLORENCE A. MILLER

*Crane Technical High School*

One phase of the enrichment program provided at Crane High School for the accelerated classes was to motivate increased use of the library. With that purpose in mind I chose a freshman class as a pilot unit. The objective was to give these students added opportunity for using library materials. Specific aims were to



build skills—to increase the ability of the students to use various library tools; to improve the quality of the students' reading as well as to increase quantity, and to discriminate between what is the good and bad in printed materials.

A first-semester freshman English class was assigned to the library for one forty-minute period a week instead of to their regular classroom. (Besides this weekly formal meeting, voluntary group meetings were held during study periods and before and after school.) After an orientation meeting in our browsing area, which is arranged as an informal living room with a rug, couches, lamps, and plants, the students' interest and enthusiasm were high. Students voted to center their reading around the westward movement and frontier life in the early United States, a unit called *Westward Ho!*

The group was divided into committees, and five general areas for research were chosen: Indians of the West, Early Transportation, Westward Movements, Frontier Life, and Women of the Early West. Using school records I made notes of the specific reading abilities and difficulties of each student. Many were stalled on reading plateaus and were much in need of more diversified reading. All aims of this program and of the individual reading difficulties were discussed with the students, and their suggestions were made a part of the program as far as possible.

Materials used were:

1. *Reading Circles*, which served as a self-help device to broaden reading interests and to assist in leaving a reading plateau.
2. Books, magazines, pamphlets, slides, filmstrips, and records relating to the unit.
3. *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, for finding magazine articles.
4. Card File—3 x 5 cards were voluntarily filled out by students to serve as recommendations to other students for leisure reading or for some phase of the unit. (These student recommendations were in constant demand.)

Activities included discussions as to what quality in a book or magazine means. Oral reports on various books and other materials were used to illustrate these points. The student was encouraged to identify with the character under discussion and to interpret behavior in light of his own experience. This helped to extend the student's understanding of the human relationships involved and the problems other people have had. The reader also

became aware of possible solutions to these problems. Guided by the teacher-librarian, standards for good literature were compiled by the students, and books that they read were rated.

Committees reported and panel discussions were held whenever the students were ready. Maps and charts of the West were made and displayed. One culminating activity consisted of making a miniature room, which was furnished authentically by the committee on frontier homes, for display in the library. The committee on Indians made a model accordion-pleated book of pictures for use with an opaque projector. This led to the suggestion that similar books on other subjects be made by future groups to become a part of the permanent library collection for use by the teachers and students in other units of instruction. All library materials for the unit were listed for future use in other English classes.

During the last two weeks, general discussions centered around lively constructive criticism of each *Reading Circle*, with commendations for improvement and suggestions for future improvement. Each pupil had a chance to express himself. Each had increased his reading skill and ability to make worthwhile choices of reading material.

### **Planning for the Gifted**

By BERNICE K. DONEHUE

*Librarian, Lindblom High School*

Something new isn't always accompanied by something blue. When the librarians at Lindblom High School learned that they were to take an active part in a revitalized gifted-student program, far from being saddened at the innovation they found instead their teaching spirits heightened at the challenge of specialized library instruction for accelerated groups in which selected college-bound students had been blocked for advanced academic learning.

Library instruction at Lindblom has always included an initiatory learning series, presented by the librarians for incoming freshmen, with occasional follow-up instruction in later semesters as requested by individual teachers. A still more expansive program had been the aim of the librarians. Now we had our golden moment.

A class schedule for blocked classes, together with names of assigned instructors, was sent to us by the program chairman. Through it we found that groups of approximately twenty-five "cream-of-the-crop" students had been blocked in the initial semesters of all four high school years, so that we were to instruct,



through their English class schedule, four first-semester groups, all of whom had been taught basic library skills.

As our introductory approach we decided on a choice-sheet individually prepared for each of the English teachers involved. Since we were considering accelerated students, we wanted to eliminate coverage of content already mastered and felt our choice-sheet would accomplish this since it invited pre-discussion in the classroom, permitting a student voice and an instructor's preference. In preparing our sheets we considered ability level, basic curriculum, and the specialized aims of the English instructors as interpreted through a teacher-and-librarian interview.

At the head of each choice-sheet we placed the statement, "Our plan for this group includes the following items. If in your opinion, or the polled opinion of your class, this material overlaps knowledge already mastered by the members of your class, we shall modify our plan in accordance with the needs of the students involved." Our four sheets of suggestions included:

1. A quick overview of the materials of the induction unit with emphasis on the relationships between reading assignments and the location of reading materials.

2. Explanation of the structure of the book to insure competent use of the book as a study tool.

3. Training for efficiency in the use of the unabridged dictionary.

4. Use and distinguishing features of general encyclopedias.

5. Use of the card catalog and its applications to the study process.

6. Uses of the *Reader's Guide* in high school research.

7. General reference techniques.

8. Advanced reference tools.

9. Library instruction specific to the demands of any individual class unit.

The English teachers chose all the possibilities with the exception of the lesson on the structure of the book. All teachers showed a preference for the reference lecture and the instruction specific to the research needs of individual class units.

As a Lindblom library project, we had for some time been experimenting with 16mm slides made by student photographers who, under our direction, had been recording on film all our service activities, reference holdings, procedures and methods, catalog records, shelf arrangement, and special features, with Lindblom

students photographed in these many facets of our library scene. Our reason for the experimentation with slides was based on a conviction that no library teaching can supersede one that demonstrates the actual locale of the learning activity. In the new teaching task now set before us, our experimental slides were to prove invaluable.

From our several sets of color photos it was a simple matter to construct an excellent review lesson since the film series included a visual record of all the Dewey divisions, as well as slides of every type of catalog card found in our own catalog. For the lesson on the *Reader's Guide* we were ready with color slides of our complete set of bound guides, separate pictures of each cumulative form of the guide, sample pages from the guide, and slides of students working with the *Reader's Guide*. With these we were able to present an efficient exposition of the uses of a magazine index. Where instruction on reference tools was scheduled, slides showing features of basic and specialized reference books were shown preliminary to examination of the book itself. Visual learning was always accompanied by careful verbal exposition and follow-up activities which might include problem-solving sessions, mimeographed summation sheets, game-techniques, or even field trips.

Concurrently the English teachers working in the program were actively correlating classroom activity and library instruction. One teacher placed on reserve selected books which were a cross-section of the "best-loved" books of all time. This reading project was followed by literary charades based on the readings, plus professional TV book reviews with student buzz-sessions as an aftermath. Here class teacher and librarian worked together as literary advisors.

For another class which had covered a unit on *Beowulf* and was ready for the Great Bard, the Shakespeare unit was introduced through an instruction on library resource materials which offered background knowledge of English literature. A problem-solving session followed in which students, in teams, located answers to questions originating from the resource books. The interest engendered was so thorough that the English teacher continued the problem-solving activity in the classroom by means of a "mobile library," and, from an incidental question on manners and customs, worked out a further highly practical unit on acceptable social behavior at the Junior Prom! "How far that little candle throws his beams."



Through the "new" and continuing group instruction, English teachers and librarians at Lindblom, working together, pooling ideas, sharing plans, brought to realization the importance of a planned learning media for the gifted, the value of shared effort, and the wonders of as simple a technique as taking a picture of your own story and sharing it.

### **Read Faster and Better**

By MILDRED R. POPE

*Librarian, DuSable High School*

The greatest pleasure in life is that of reading, while we are young.

—WILLIAM HAZLITT

Since September, 1959, as part of the library program, top learners in an accelerated third-year English class at DuSable High School have participated in a developmental reading project. Organized by the English consultant, the purpose of this program was to increase speed in reading, to build vocabulary, and to improve comprehension.

The class was programmed for three periods a week in the library under the supervision of the teacher-librarian, who continued to collaborate with the English teacher throughout the semester. Early in October the California Reading Test (Advanced Form AA) was given to the class. Early in January the California Reading Test (Form CC) was administered. In October, the median score was 10.9; in January, it was 12.5. The faculty and the students were so encouraged by these results that the developmental reading program was extended to second- and third-year English classes.

These classes were programmed for two periods a week. Lessons and activities were organized by the librarians, utilizing the reading accelerator, tachistoscope, Science Research Associates' reading books, and progress folders. Lesson plans were geared to include vocabulary building, improvement in comprehension, and speed in reading.

#### **Basic Plan for Reading Program**

In recommending materials for individual use, choose selections one year below the grade level of silent reading as shown on a student's test results. The order of topics and the extent to which each is covered should be determined by the needs and interests of each class.

- Lesson 1. A. Testing (California Reading Test, Advanced Form AA).  
Use 6th or 7th grade selections as initial rate test. As each student finishes reading the selection have him raise his hand and give his reading time.  
B. Prepare and use observation chart to note reading habits.  
C. Use student inventory to provide file of useful information on students' background, reading, and interests.  
D. Where necessary, check physical record.
- Lesson 2. A. Common reading difficulties and their causes.  
B. Skills involved in the reading process.  
C. Test results and their significance.  
D. Realistic short-range and long-range goals for improvement of reading.
- Lesson 3. A. Use of mechanical aids and individual records.  
B. Explanation of elements involved in adapting rate and in method of timing.  
C. Introduction of material to be used in class.
- Lesson 4. Study method (Useful: Chapter 2, *Effective Study*, Robinson, Harper, 1946).
- Lesson 5. A. Locating information; use of library tools.  
B. Vocabulary building: context clues, visual discrimination, structural analysis, use of dictionary.
- Lesson 6. Semantics. (Useful: *Six Weeks to Words of Power*, Funk (1953); *Words and What They Do to You*, Minteer (Row-Peterson); *Language Habits in Human Affairs*, Lee (Harper); *Thinking Straight*, Beardsley.
- Lesson 7. A. Analyzing propaganda.  
B. Drawing conclusions and making inferences.  
(Useful: *Reading Critically*. S. C. Kay, Twayne Publishers, 1952.)
- Lesson 8. A. Interpretation of graphs, maps, charts, tables.  
B. Visualization (Exercises such as those in *A College Developmental Reading Manual*, Wilking-Webster, Houghton Mifflin).
- Lesson 9. Retests
- Lesson 10. A. Test results, comparisons with previous scores.  
B. Evaluation of the course by students and teachers.  
C. Reading for the overall picture, for detail.  
D. Selecting and organizing materials.  
E. Evaluating what is read.

Encouraged by the evident possibilities in this course, we inaugurated a program for the third-year students called Depth Rating, employing skills that had been learned the preceding year and concentrating on reading and comprehension of the printed page.

Each student is required to read at least five adult fiction books, one play, five poems, five essays, and five short stories. During the semester the students take trips to movies, legitimate stage productions, and art exhibits. As a culminating project they take a trip to New York or Washington. We should like to extend this project to include Mexico, South America, or Europe.



To acquaint students with the many kinds of tests and to increase their ability to function efficiently in test situations, each student purchases a copy of the practice book for the *National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test*. The library has copies of other practice tests which are used, such as *How to Pass College Entrance Tests* (Peters, Arco, 1953), *How to Prepare for College Entrance Examinations* (Brownstein and Weiner), *Practice Book for the Scholastic Aptitude Test*, and *You Can Win a Scholarship*, (Brownstein, Weiner, and Kaplan).

In addition to the above activities, speakers from various fields and representatives from colleges visit the class to give informative talks and to answer questions.

Four times during a school year class meetings are held with the principal, assistant principal in charge of curriculum, adjustment counselors, grade sponsors, librarians, and parents, who have given the program active support. To improve scholarship and achievement the two following areas are emphasized: developing good home study habits, and extending outside reading interests.

The librarians entertain the student-parent-teacher group with the specific objective of convincing all of the importance of the library to the parents and to the students. This activity is culminated during National Library Week when new books are displayed, bibliographies are distributed to parents and students, and summer reading programs are planned.

Although the program has been in effect two years and results have been encouraging, we feel that it is still in its formative and experimental stages. Evaluation of student achievement has been made only in terms of test results at the end of the course. We are currently considering means by which the basis of evaluation can be effectively expanded.

### Cultural Activities

By GERTRUDE GUTHMAN

*Librarian, Schurz High School*

Convinced that a high school library has an opportunity to be something more than a place to read or to check out books or to look up material for class reports, the library at Schurz High School sponsors an extensive cultural activities program in addition to its regular library services.

#### 1. *Humanities Club*

A Humanities Club meets once a week after school in the library under the direction of the librarian. Membership is open

to any student interested in the arts. Members meet to discuss outstanding books, plays, movies, and TV programs; to listen to records of classical music; and to see and discuss reproductions of famous paintings. Teachers from the music and art departments are frequently invited by the library to speak to the group. Students are encouraged to express any ideas, impressions, or reactions they may have. Emphasis is on enjoyment of the arts.

## 2. *Theatre Attendance*

Theatre attendance is encouraged whenever suitable plays, ballets, concerts, operas, or motion pictures are shown in Chicago. The librarian believes that it is the duty of the schools to encourage the right kind of theatre attendance, since so little motivation of this type comes from the homes. Special rates are obtained whenever possible through the Educators Theatre Committee, or by direct contact with theater managers. Notices in the school bulletin and displays alert the students and teachers whenever special rates are available. During the past year, over a thousand students and teachers attended the following performances at special rates: Jose Greco Ballet, *Ben Hur*, Lyric Opera Rehearsal, *Spartacus*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Pro-Musica Concert, *Porgy and Bess* (in Puppet Opera), *Exodus*, and *Raisin in the Sun*.

## 3. *Art Exhibits*

Art exhibits are held at regular intervals. Paintings in all media, ceramics, and jewelry made by the students in the art department are often displayed. Exhibitions at the Art Institute are also publicized.

## 4. *Phonograph Records*

A collection of 125 classical music albums is available for two-week loan periods. The library also has a phonograph with two sets of earphones for library listening.

## 5. *Television*

Outstanding evening television programs of educational or cultural value are listed twice weekly in the school bulletin under the heading *TV Worth Watching*. Information as to the time and station for these programs is supplied by "Shows Worth Watching," a weekly pamphlet to which the library subscribes. This service has proved helpful to the teachers of English, music, science, and social studies.

A 23" television set was purchased for library use by the



January, 1961 graduating class. It was immediately made available to the social studies classes in time for the Presidential inauguration and the State of the Union address. It will be used for suitable educational programs, for Presidential news conferences, and, in the future, for Airborne TV.

Through these activities our library has become a cultural center in our school.

### Teaching Expository Writing

#### Using Literature as Content Improves Theme Writing

By BERNICE COHEN

*Hyde Park High School*

"Give us high school graduates who can write clear, well-organized exposition." We teachers of high school English are all too familiar with this plea of the colleges.

As a teacher of accelerated senior English classes, I decided, several semesters ago, to take a new look at the standard semester formula of ten weeks for grammar and composition and ten weeks for literature. Because the senior year should be a time of extensive reading of the world's great literature, I decided to center the work of the semester around literature for the entire twenty weeks. But, what about the composition work that the colleges were demanding? I integrated the training in writing with the literature analysis—and it worked!

After the first impromptu theme, written during the first week of the semester, I knew what the grammar and punctuation weaknesses of these particular students were. I decided that the ten weeks usually spent on a study of formal grammar would be a waste of time. (Too often, the student who gets 100 on every grammar test cannot write a good paragraph.) I had to assume that these above-average English students had, by their twelfth year of school, learned the "rules." As seniors, they needed only to be helped with the particular errors they were making, often through sheer carelessness, in their themes. Two or three carefully corrected themes usually are sufficient to make the student aware of his deficiencies. Once the errors in "mechanics" have been corrected, proper emphasis can be placed upon the problem of organization.

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Reprinted from the May, 1960, issue of the *Chicago Schools Journal*, published at Chicago Teachers College.

### All Written Work Uses Theme Form

Grading themes takes time, as we all know. I provided more time for both the writing and the grading of themes by having *all* written work submitted in theme form. For example, my final test on any literature work we study is a theme, written in class, using a topic sentence I write on the blackboard. For a theme on *Hamlet*, the class might find this sentence as the topic to be developed: "A careful reading of *Hamlet* provides the answer to whether Hamlet's madness was real or feigned." All of my exams are "open book," for I am interested in the student's ability to understand the work, not in his ability to memorize meaningless details of it; he has to be able to demonstrate this understanding in a clear, well-organized expository development of the topic sentence.

Another opportunity for the assigning and grading of themes is gained by substituting class-written themes of the type described above for the usual "book report." I have used the following topic sentences for book report themes with good results: "The ending of (title) by (author) is or is not inevitable." "The character of (main character) is developed mainly by means of self-revelation (or action of the plot or comments and reactions of the other characters, etc.)." "The plot (or theme or characterization) in (title) is similar to that in (title of book previously reported on)."

### Five Objectives Achieved by Integration

Having all written work submitted in the form of expository themes accomplishes several objectives for the English teacher:

1. He uses *all* of his paper-grading time in eliminating the most serious weakness of his students: inability to write well-organized expository themes.

2. He gives the students *subject-matter* for their themes. A lack of "something-to-say" accounts for part of the weakness in expository writing. However, when the theme is based on a literary work the class is studying, the student has some concrete material with which to work.

3. He *motivates* the student by providing *proof* of the necessity of expressing one's self clearly. When the theme is a test, it is imperative that the student make his points in a clear and logical form.

4. He emphasizes the importance of *thinking about* and *seeing relationships* in the literature, as opposed to mere memorization of detail.

5. He uses an examination form which students respect. They know that it is both unnecessary and impossible to cheat on an open-book examination. They concentrate, instead, on producing the clearest exposition possible of the assigned topic.

#### **Students Gain Insight, Understanding of Grammar**

Thus, by integrating composition work with the study of literature, the English teacher gives himself more time to spend on both aspects of the course. The student places grammar in its proper role; it is not an end in itself—it is a tool which enables him to write correctly. Moreover, the student sees the need for learning to write exposition; it, too, is merely a tool which enables him to express his ideas clearly. Finally, the student sees that reading a play, poem, or novel means understanding its ideas and structure, as contrasted with the memorization of details in order to pass an objective test.

Using the content of literature as subject matter for expository writing by students seems to increase greatly their ability to write correctly, clearly, and effectively. The ability to write effectively about the content seems to be a manifestation of the students' clear understanding of the content. This suggests that teachers in other content areas—notably the social sciences—might make great steps toward accomplishing a number of objectives if they were to employ the techniques here described. Students who have practice in producing rational, carefully thought-out effective essays dealing with the content of history and geography and civics courses are much more likely to practice the kinds of higher rational skills which are of such great importance in these areas. This is not meant to suggest that the teacher of the social sciences should be a teacher of grammar, but that he could contribute effectively to his students' ability both to write and to think if he were to have the majority of their written work and examinations done in the pattern I have described.

That the above-outlined plan accomplishes its goal is proved to me over and over as I receive expressions of gratitude from former students who are finding themselves adequately prepared for college work as the result of the training they have received in their senior English classes.

#### **A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Teaching Unit**

By JENNY COHLER  
*Mather High School*

Though not essential to the enjoyment and understanding of the play, an introduction to Greek mythology and the reading of



the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* make a delightful prelude to the study of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Still remembered are the poignant whisperings of Thisbe and Pyramus; and the exploits of Theseus, the audacious warrior against the Amazons and imaginative and devoted prince of Athens. This Greek world of fantasy and fancy is alive with the stir of experiences beyond belief, but with the power of make-believe. It is this same make-believe which breathes life into Puck, Titania, and Oberon, and to all of the strange and oftentimes grotesque business of the play.

By means of lecture, student report, library visit, and discussion growing out of a variety of teacher and student experience such essentials of background information as the distinctive qualities of drama, the structure and language of a Shakespearean play, the unique form of the Elizabethan theatre, and the character of Elizabethan audiences are acquired. To most of our "Honors" freshmen, Shakespeare is a familiar though awesome figure. Some have traveled to Stratford performances, many have seen or heard "must" performances on TV and FM. All are aware that studying Shakespeare is a step forward in their cultural development.

The following Study Guide, given to each student at the beginning of the unit, directs him to the purpose, problems, and assignments, and to the text to be used. The class is instructed to read all introductory information in the text, to give close attention to explanatory notes, and to read the play at home, preferably aloud, and particularly with other members of the family. Students are asked to indicate portions of the play which in their judgment will be best for in-class performance, and to circle new words for vocabulary study. The paperback is especially adapted to our purpose, and onto the inside cover are clipped notepapers for these and other references. The more skillful oral readers are assigned parts, with an understudy for each part. About two weeks are allowed for the in-class reading and discussion of the play. During their at-home reading students make notes of passages and actions which they do not understand. These more elusive sections are discussed in class, as well as new words and passages of felicitous phrasing, of humor, of dramatic impact, or of philosophic insight. Student devised questions are used for a review of each act.

As the reading progresses, a list of 100 words is culled from the play for vocabulary study. These words are defined, studied in their immediate context, illustrated in other contexts, and used by the students in original contexts. The final assignment consists of a short answer test based on questions previously submitted by

the class, and an open-book essay written in class on one of the following subjects: Humor in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Fantasy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Theseus as a wise and just ruler; Class distinctions as revealed in the play; "Lord! What fools these mortals be!"; Shakespeare's love of nature; If I were in the Elizabethan audience; Problems of interpretation; Universalities in the play; Problems in casting; My favorite character.

The culminating activity is a Shakespeare Festival Week. Students prepare room and library displays, and a committee plans a program which includes reports on special projects, memorizations, musical interpretations, and discussions of home participation. Since most of the class attended the Stratford, Connecticut Theatre performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Blackstone Theatre, a lively argument on matters of staging, directing, casting, and role interpretation was added to the program.

### ***A Midsummer Night's Dream—Study Guide—English IH***

#### **I. Purpose:**

To become familiar with one of Shakespeare's most famous comedies, to read and dramatize the play for enjoyment and understanding, and to discover thereby the magic of Shakespeare's art.

#### **II. Class activities:**

- A. To learn about the period in which Shakespeare wrote
- B. To become familiar with the structure of an Elizabethan play
  - 1. As a development of earlier forms of drama
  - 2. As an adaptation to stage, theatre, and audience limitations of its time
  - 3. As forerunner of the modern play
- C. To read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (PL-67, \$ .35)
  - 1. Distinguish the three plots.
  - 2. Know intimately the characters who dominate the play.
  - 3. Participate imaginatively in its fantasy and humor.
  - 4. Recognize philosophic implications in the play.
  - 5. Learn the new vocabulary.
  - 6. Identify and memorize passages which you select for beauty, for sensitive understanding of human nature, for incisiveness of thought and expression.
  - 7. Summarize in your own words significant scenes in the development of the play.
  - 8. Engage in some creative activity suggested by the reading and discussion of the play.

#### **III. Individual:**

- A. Become familiar through reading and discussion with class activities above.
- B. Learn the special vocabulary that applies to this study: exposition, initial incident, rising action, climax, resolution, denouement, plot, theme, blank verse, soliloquy.

- C. Bring the play experience into your family circle by reading aloud and discussing passages of special significance. Report on this shared literature experience.
- D. Memorize lines and passages of your own choosing (about 50 lines).
- E. Prepare a special project related to your study of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It may be one of the following, or one of your own devising:
  1. Comparison with a modern play essentially in the same spirit of fantasy or humor, as for example: *Mrs. McThing*, Chase; *Peter Pan*, Barrie; *Beggar on Horseback*, Kaufman; *Pusseycat and the Expert Plumber Who Was a Man*, Miller; *Arsenic and Old Lace*, Kesselring; *You Can't Take It with You*, Kaufman; *Finnian's Rainbow*, Harburg; *Brigadoon*, Lerner; *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Rostand; *Feathertop*, Hawthorne
  2. The reading of other Shakespearean comedies: *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, *A Comedy of Errors*, *The Tempest*
  3. Construction of a model Shakespearean theatre complete with stage sets for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or for any other of Shakespeare's plays
  4. The presentation of a puppet program with a report on the history of puppetry and an explanation of its art
  5. A program of music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or for any other of Shakespeare's writings, with appropriate narration

### *A Midsummer Night's Dream—Test*

#### I. True-false and completion:

1. The Tudor and Elizabethan period are the same.
2. The Elizabethan audience believed in supernatural spirits.
3. The theatre was attended by women as well as men.
4. Acting was looked upon as a noble profession.
5. Shakespeare was immediately acclaimed as the greatest of playwrights.
6. Women first appeared on the stage at that time.
7. The plays reveal that Shakespeare was a well-educated man.
8. Costuming and music played an important part in his plays.
9. Scenery played an important part in his plays.
10. The real proof of the greatness of Shakespeare's plays is \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Before the building of theatres, plays were presented in \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Historical plays were popular with Elizabethan audiences.
13. They liked tragedies of violence as well as light comedy.
14. Theseus is important in the exposition of the play.
15. Hermia defies both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Bottom and his fellow craftsmen plan to present \_\_\_\_\_ on the occasion of \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Helena and Hermia had been rivals from childhood.
18. Oberon and Titania are \_\_\_\_\_ who quarrel over \_\_\_\_\_.
19. Puck is a \_\_\_\_\_ who helps \_\_\_\_\_.
20. The quarrel of Oberon and Titania results in \_\_\_\_\_ on earth.
21. Helena deceives Hermia by \_\_\_\_\_.
22. Puck follows Oberon's instruction.



23. Puck's actions upset Oberon's plans.
24. The climax of the play occurs when \_\_\_\_\_.
25. Humor is introduced chiefly in the character of \_\_\_\_\_.
26. Puck is an admirer of mankind.
27. His mischief is sometimes spiteful.
28. The moonlight is important in such parts of the play as \_\_\_\_\_.
29. In appearance Hermia is \_\_\_\_\_ and Helena is \_\_\_\_\_. Hermia is in love with \_\_\_\_\_ who returns her love until \_\_\_\_\_. He then falls madly in love with Helena, who is in love with \_\_\_\_\_. All is untangled finally when \_\_\_\_\_.
30. The predominant rhythm pattern of the play is \_\_\_\_\_. However, Shakespeare also uses \_\_\_\_\_ in such scenes as \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ in such scenes as \_\_\_\_\_.

II. *Vocabulary Test:* Opposite the corresponding number on your paper, place the letter of the word in list B which corresponds closely in meaning to the word in list A.

- A. 1. austerity 2. adamant 3. audacious 4. benignity 5. concomitant  
 6. desultory 7. dissembling 8. dulcet 9. enamored 10. expound  
 11. flout 12. heresy 13. incorporate 14. knavish 15. languish  
 16. mellifluous 17. ostensibly 18. paragon 19. promontory 20. shrewishness  
 21. surfeit 22. transcend 23. vagaries 24. vixen  
 25. wanton
- B. a. honeyed tones b. unite c. scolding woman d. rocky projection  
 e. perfection f. ramblings g. anti-religious h. aimless i. mock  
 j. to lack strength k. accompanying l. bold m. pretending n. explain  
 o. stubborn, immovable p. kindness q. uncontrolled r. rise above or beyond  
 s. too much t. harmonious u. apparent v. ill-tempered w. self-denial  
 x. in love with y. dishonest

## Articulation of Language Arts Instruction

By HELENE L. HURD

*Von Steuben Elementary and High School*

Von Steuben Elementary and High School, the only public school of its type in Chicago, includes grades seven through twelve. The membership of the school is about 2000 students, with approximately 700 students in the seventh and eighth grade elementary section. In September, 1959, when Von Steuben opened as a six-year school, the English department began the work of integrating the language arts program, so that there would be a smooth progression of core subject matter in every phase of English instruction.

Under the guidance of the district superintendent and the principal, the teachers in the English department gradually worked out a tentative, and then more definite, course of study for grammar, written composition, and literature. This course of study is valuable in several ways: it provides a progression of subject matter

from year to year, starting with simpler requirements and gradually becoming more complex; it is adapted to the particular needs of the Von Steuben students, most of whom go to college; it gives the English teachers definite, basic units to cover in each semester's work; and it prevents unnecessary overlapping and repetition of subject matter in the different grades.

At least once every semester the teachers evaluate the course of study and make suggestions for its improvement. The basic literature curriculum is still in the process of development. The units for grades 9B through 12A have been determined by the high school English teachers, but the literature units for the seventh and eighth grades are still tentative. The department is now at work, however, on an interim program for elementary literature, pending the results of the work of an over-all district committee on elementary literature.

The seventh and eighth grade students are divided into two groups. Pupils with a high reading score and above average achievement are programmed for foreign language classes. Those who need basic reading instruction are programmed for reading classes. All the seventh and eighth grade students take language arts, including grammar, composition, spelling, and literature.

The department chairman has worked out a weekly time-schedule for the elementary language arts classes. The time-schedule strengthens and coordinates the instructional program, places emphasis where it is needed, and aids the teacher in planning the work. The time-allotment each week is:

Written Composition .....	80 minutes
Grammar and Usage .....	50 minutes
Spelling .....	30 minutes
Literature .....	40 minutes
<hr/>	
Total .....	200 minutes

The school library is also geared to the coordination of instruction. The elementary librarian conducts regular classes in library instruction in the use of library facilities, such as the card catalogue, general reference books, *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, and the unabridged dictionary. Free reading periods complete the library work. When the elementary pupils enter the ninth grade, they are prepared to use the library with no further formal instruction. The high school librarian serves the high school students in their more complex reference work.

The school newspaper represents the efforts of students from

grade seven through twelve. Some of the best creative and expository writing done in the English classes finds its way into print via the *Von Steuben Journal*, which acts as another integrating element in the school.

### Initiating a Program

By ALICE M. RAPE

*Austin High School*

Five years ago at Austin High School it was commonplace to hear capable students complain about the reaction of their classmates when they inadvertently showed enthusiasm for any subject of study at school. Today we do not hear that complaint. New avenues to learning have stimulated the academically able to new levels of achievement.

The Advanced Placement Program in English is one of these new avenues for a selected group of upperclassmen who show promise in this area of study. It offers a challenge to the best students as well as a reward: first year college credit for those who demonstrate their proficiency in the College Board Advanced Placement Examination given in May of each year. Perhaps an account of our experience of little more than two semesters will assist others who are considering such a program.

In the fall of 1959 we planned an experimental one-semester course which was to begin in February, 1960. We were careful to set a modest goal, describing the course as "senior high school English—plus." The next task was the selection of the students.

We began by consulting the teachers of students whose IQ scores, "L" scores (ACE aptitude test), and previous English grades indicated that they were qualified for the course. When the plans for the course were described to the students who were judged eligible, thirty wished to enroll—too many for the recommended "under twenty." We decided therefore to ask Miss Margaret Perry of the University of Chicago to assist in evaluating the composition skills of these students. The thirty applicants were given the University of Chicago placement test in English, which required the writing of an argument on one of three suggested topics. First I evaluated the essays, judging them as college freshmen compositions; the papers were then sent to Miss Perry, who prepared a detailed comment on each one. On the basis of this evaluation, nineteen students were selected for the class.



Honesty leads me to say that the quality of the student essays was not impressive. Many students showed a high potential, but all of them needed more training and practice in all kinds of composition skills, particularly organization. For me, the experience was valuable since it was necessary that I gain an ability to criticize written work at a new level.

Class membership settled, the most pressing problem was a course of study. Guiding principles in the *Advanced Placement Program Syllabus* (1958) provided the basis. *The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals* (December 1958) also contained helpful reports. Equipped with this information I visited two nearby high schools, Oak Park-River Forest and Evanston Township, where Advanced Placement programs in several subjects have been established for many years.

The course of study in its final form was a composite of the significant parts of the honors course in senior English plus what material was included in the textbooks we had chosen. Three textbooks were ordered for the class: *Understanding Fiction* and *Understanding Poetry* by Brooks and Warren, and *A Rhetoric Case Book* by Connolly. For novels and plays we used texts available in the English department bookroom, supplementing with paperbacks when necessary. In one semester we covered short units in four fields of literature: drama, including *Oedipus Rex*, *Hamlet*, and *Hedda Gabler* (students read two other plays independently); short story, using the Brooks and Warren approach; novel, each student reading independently three or more works on some general theme; and poetry, again using the Brooks and Warren method of study. Interspersed between assignments in literature, the composition assignments were often related to the literary work being studied. The emphasis at all times was on quality rather than quantity in the students' reading and on the "ability to write well about something important," as stipulated in the *Syllabus*.

To provide a favorable situation for the class and the teacher, the schedule was arranged so that the class could meet for a double period (80 minutes) five days a week. This arrangement permitted the use of impromptu writing assignments from college or Advanced Placement examinations, which require an hour's writing time. The double period also made possible a flexible use of time. Sometimes the class met for only one of the periods and used the other for study. Sometimes, when the students were preparing long papers and needed time in the library, it was convenient to suspend class meetings for two or three days. Most important, the

extended class time provided opportunity for invaluable conferences with students, such conferences being especially useful in the teaching of composition.

Of the nineteen students, twelve took the examination in May, 1960. Although these students had had only one semester of preparation instead of a full year, their test scores were encouraging. Results of the May, 1961 examination after this year's class has had a full year of study will be more significant.

Thirty-one students registered for this year's class. Using teacher recommendations and scores of proficiency in English, we selected nineteen, whose ITED scores ranged from 91 to a high of 99-plus. We included one girl with a score of 87 because of her intense desire to be in the class as well as her history of superior performance in many subject areas. We have found that if sufficient ability is present, desire to succeed is the most important single factor. A brilliant student who lacks interest and purpose is not encouraged to enroll. We have allowed capable second-semester junior students to enroll if there is room for them. Eleven members of the present class were second-semester juniors in September; eight were first-semester seniors.

We have referred several times to the Advanced Placement examination, but we do not consider it the most important feature of the program. The examination and the college credit are merely the frosting on the cake. The cake itself is the enriched course we are able to offer our most capable students. As the honors courses in the first three years provide better training, the students in the Advanced Placement class should show a higher level of accomplishment.

What do the students themselves say? Most of them found two types of class activity of outstanding value: the writing of impromptu compositions, and the class discussion of reading. Most of them wished there had been time for a more thorough study of rhetoric. All of them recognized the importance of a good reading background and suggested various methods for encouraging extensive reading outside of class.

Our experience with the program encourages us to continue. The response of the students shows that they welcome the stimulation of more advanced work. Since our beginning results are good but not spectacular, we have the prospect of raising our goals year by year for some time to come. The influence of higher standards in a senior class inevitably demands the raising of standards at lower levels, too. Already moves in that direction have begun.

## Wisdom Through Literature: A Year's Study

By MARGARET ANNAN

*South Shore High School*

A student, fresh from a 3A study of *A Tale of Two Cities*, commented on the Advanced Placement course: "Dig, dig, dig! that's all I hear. I feel like Mr. Lorry on the stagecoach to Dover." Even if this student did not himself care to "dig out" deep-buried ideas, he had received the message. If literature is to achieve its highest function, that of putting the student in touch with minds greater than his own, it is presumptuous to think that he can sit like a medium at a séance waiting for great minds to convey their messages to him. Their truths and beauties will remain "Buried Alive" unless he is willing to dig, dig, dig into the bastilles of meaning.

On this conviction our Advanced Placement program is built. Despite the authoritative precepts of T. S. Eliot and Archibald McLeish that, in the case of poetry at least, we must yield our minds to poetry rather than poetry to our minds, our program has proceeded on the theory that enjoyment follows after learning and that learning itself, as Aristotle has said, is pain. Eliot's plea that his poetry not be studied in high school classes is an oblique confession of a belief that great intuitions and feelings do not rise spontaneously from untrained minds. It is the high school teacher's painful task to see that the mind is stocked with adequate responses, ready to answer appropriately the master's call. It is the aim of the teacher to anticipate the summons by making the student aware of the complexities of great minds, by familiarizing him with the wide range of techniques used, and by encouraging him to imitate as well as judge the depths of thought and appropriateness of method.

Thus literature becomes an exercise book in Life and Art—Oh, please, Mr. Eliot, this is not sacrilege. For Art is Life bridled, and the emotions must be trained to respond justly to the new set of laws by which Life is bound. Symmetry and structure, continuities and levels of continuities, images and ironies, must be measured as systematically in a literary encounter as X's and Y's in an algebra problem. And since, as in any skill, certain exercises strengthen certain faculties, the order of the exercises is important.

Homer's *Iliad* affords one of the best rallying grounds for a venture into analysis. There the student can become aware of the artistic demands of a great work—the symmetry, the balance of structure, the relationship of the parts to the whole. Let us not



be beguiled, however, into thinking the student will respond eagerly to the master's voice. The hallowed ground of Troyland with the Towers of Ilium that Robert Browning captured single-handed at the age of five is a ghost town to the gifted student of today. Yet the siege is worth the struggle. If the student has been briefed on the pattern of the classical epic, he becomes pleased with himself, and with Homer, upon discovering that, in accordance with epic plan, Homer, in the opening lines, has done the most difficult part of the analysis for him—the uncovering of the unifying principle. Once Homer has stated that he and the Muse intend to sing the Wrath of Achilles, Peleus' son, which brought innumerable woes to the Achaians until Zeus' counsel was accomplished, the student, accepting Achilles' Wrath as a common denominator, can proceed with confidence to divide the main action into its component parts. He will find the first section unified by the action of Achilles nursing his Wrath; the second, by Achilles turning his Wrath toward Hector. He will find, in each section, the Achaians acting in rapport with each phase of Achilles' Wrath, succumbing to his loss, putting pressure on him to lay aside his Wrath, and being reconciled with him with he transfers his Wrath to Hector. Homer makes the division easy by marking off each section for us. In the opening of each of the three divisions, which are the equivalents of the acts of a three-act play, Homer has Achilles swear an oath establishing or confirming his Wrath; and, by the last part of each division, Homer has had Zeus accomplish one phase of his counsel. Now that the principle of order has been established, the endless combats, harangues, oaths and omens achieve a just purpose, and seemingly extraneous details such as the catalogue of ships and captains, or Thersites' incitement of the Achaians against Agamemnon, can be explained in terms of both structure and meaning.

The importance of parallelism in underscoring the symmetry of the structure is clear in the recurrence of Achilles' oaths and Zeus' counsel as a device to mark the steps in the development of the action. It is equally clear as a device for re-enforcing the theme. The parallel activities of the Achaians, the Trojans, the gods, in Wrath and in Counsel, emphasize the destructive effects of Wrath and refusal of Counsel. The gods quarrel over their favorite mortals, and this is resolved by the acceptance of Hephaistos' counsel; Menelaus and Antilochus quarrel over a prize at the funeral games, and this ends in friendly gallantries; Achilles and Agamemnon quarrel over the war-prize, Briseis, but both are proud and unmindful of Counsel, and this brings innumerable

woes to the Achaians until Zeus' Counsel is accomplished. By this time the unity, the balance, the symmetry, the rising of the action to a climax like a sweeping wave, should have convinced even the most skeptical student that Art does not happen by accident.

As a pattern for the study of the artistic level, the *Iliad* cannot easily be surpassed; as a pattern for the study of physical and spiritual levels, Shaw's *St. Joan* offers a better approach—not because its spiritual message is superior to that of other works, but because the turning point, the messages, the paradoxes of the play, depend upon a juxtaposition of physical and spiritual successes. Joan's real success is the result of her physical downfall, her burning at the stake, since this achievement marks her spiritual triumph. Even the unburnt heart, strange symbol of Joan's courage, stresses Shaw's fusion of physical and spiritual meanings.

Once the student has become aware of such fundamental approaches, his responses should be strengthened with conscious effort. Awareness of the function of balance and parallelism, carried over from the study of the *Iliad*, and of the interaction of physical and spiritual meanings, carried over from the study of *St. Joan*, should now be reinforced by a study of similar patterns in *An Enemy of the People*, the *Scarlet Letter*, and, on the smaller scale, "Dover Beach." In each of these, the parts are marked by recurring sign posts, just as the parts of the *Iliad* are marked off by Achilles' oaths. In "Dover Beach," three seas, in the *Scarlet Letter*, three scaffold scenes, in *An Enemy of the People*, three "great discoveries," direct the movement of the ideas. In each of these, the physical-spiritual interplay is stressed as in *St. Joan*. The student will proudly recognize the coincidence of Dr. Stockmann's and Joan's "great discoveries" being the same—the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone. The study of Dr. Stockmann's "discoveries," in turn, affords a transitional step to the more complex physical-spiritual oppositions set up by Hawthorne. Dr. Stockmann's "great discovery" that the baths are polluted at their physical source throws emphasis on his greater "discovery" that society is polluted at its spiritual source; in much the same way, Hester Prynne's physical scarlet letter, inflicted on her by the community, throws emphasis on Dimmesdale's spiritual scarlet letter, inflicted on him by his soul. So, too, Dr. Stockmann's physical isolation in a town in the North stresses his ultimate spiritual isolation in his home town; in much the same way Hester Prynne's spiritual isolation at the edge of Boston stresses Dimmesdale's spiritual isolation in the midst of his congregation. Practice in tracing such obvious continuities

should lead to more arduous "digging into" the endless intricacies of parallelisms and oppositions of sunshine and darkness, openness and secrecy, sin and penance, love and hate, individual and community, upon which the meaning of the *Scarlet Letter* depends.

Once the significance of such analysis has been established, a study of Aristotle's *Poetics* will assume meaning in its own right and project meaning to works studied in its light. With the *Poetics* in mind, the *Iliad* should be reviewed, *Agamemnon*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Electra*, *Samson Agonistes* studied, differences in structure between *Oedipus Rex* and *King Lear*, *Paradise Lost* and the *Inferno*, analyzed.

All such "digging out" of forms and meanings prepare a passage to modern literature. It forms a basis, for instance, for the judgment of such tragic plays as *Death of a Salesman*. How can this strange play, with its neurotic tragic hero and its new dimension of the subconscious acted out on the stage, be justified in terms of Aristotle's *Poetics* or of Shaw's Preface or of the forms of the great literature that preceded it? How can the great American epic, *John Brown's Body*, with its irregular verse, its many-sided symbolisms, its structural complexities, its unity in diversity, be justified in terms of Homer's *Iliad* or of Dante's *Inferno*? To answer these questions should be the goal of the Advanced Placement student.

And now, Mr. Eliot, the student, his mind thus fortified by the makings of appropriate responses, should spend some time familiarizing himself with the wisdom of Shakespeare, Spenser, Virgil, Donne, Baudelaire, Buddha, St. Augustine—writers such as these—and if he be a diligent student and learn his lessons well, he may by that time be ready for you.

### Dramatics

By JOAN C. GANCZEWSKI

*Bowen High School*

Dramatics takes many forms in the Chicago Public Schools, from skits performed by drama classes during lunch periods to authentically costumed, beautifully set productions for a paying audience in the evening. I should like to discuss briefly what our high school has done with dramatics as an extra-curricular activity.

As we have no drama class, the production of a play is strictly extra-curricular, with rehearsals held after the school day is over. Extendible and interruption-free, after-school rehearsals have the



advantage of attracting only those students who are genuinely interested. Unfortunately they also eliminate those with after school jobs.

The talent for the play is drawn from all levels. While the Senior Class play may furnish fond memories for the participants, it does not allow a wide choice of actors nor a development of their talent, nor an interesting contrast of voice, stature and maturity.

Tryouts are held for a week. At each session the play and the characters are explained. The students decide which part they wish to try for, but the director may suggest certain students for certain roles. Casting completed, the play is read through so that everyone sees the whole and his relation to it.

Then the cast is drilled in stage terminology for ease of communication in the future. After "upstage," "Cheat!" and the principle of the triangle are firmly established, the general stage movements are worked out. The director does the preliminary work at home with salt shakers and spoons substituting for the more cumbersome actors. The actors mark their own movements in their scripts while the director keeps a record of all movements for handy reference.

Most of the rehearsal time is spent in artfully extracting from these fledgling actors the correct pronunciation and interpretation of lines and the projecting of them. And when the fundamentals are conquered, they must be taught to listen, really listen, and react to their fellow actors and to feel as the characters are feeling. But all of this takes time—the more time the better. Stanislavsky rehearsed a play for a year or more; practically speaking, we have found forty-five or fifty rehearsals needed for a full-length play. If enthusiasm bogs, we invite an outsider to watch and comment, such comments being as valuable to the director, who may have become too familiar with the lines, as to the actors.

Dress rehearsals need not be a nightmare if new elements have been introduced gradually. Many of the costumes and props, like swords for fencing or a wheel chair for an invalid, should be used throughout rehearsals. A second dress rehearsal gives a fine chance to correct the mistakes of the first. A good performance makes all this effort and careful attention to detail worthwhile.

Such a great investment of time and energy deserves a worthy vehicle. Choosing a play thus becomes the most important aspect of play production. We choose a play because it says something important in beautiful or impressive language or because it is

genuinely humorous; but mainly we choose a play because we love it, and that's the best reason.

Undoubtedly, the greatest play for young amateurs is Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. It is, in fact, the only play I know that amateurs can perform as well as professionals. It demands no extremes of emotion, and the situations are real and universal. Each new generation of play-goers deserves a chance to see it and weep with Emily over the unappreciated everyday.

It was after we discovered the joy of the stylized play that doesn't require a box set, that we decided to do a Shakespearian drama, an eighty-minute version of *Twelfth Night*, cut but not rewritten or modernized. We used the version Orson Welles has recorded. To our surprise, the production was no more difficult than a modern play. The plot is immensely complicated, of course, so we prepared a summary which the audience could read beforehand and chose appropriate quotes to print under each scene in the program. In addition, many English teachers briefed their students in advance. The play was successful enough to make us think of more Shakespeare for the future, perhaps *Macbeth* or *Julius Caesar* because of their straightforward action and the students' familiarity with them.

For a change of pace we gave *The Man Who Came to Dinner* by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman. It too was cut, not to shorten but to avoid offense. (The publisher does the biggest part of this job in an appendix.) Part of the fun is bringing the references up to date and creating new jokes for the outdated ones. The play is extremely well-constructed, with vivid and colorful characters. Offhand, I can't think of a funnier second-act curtain.

While choosing a play is the most important aspect of play production, it can also be the most troublesome. Where do you turn for help or inspiration? You can thumb through publishers' catalogues or lists in dramatic text books, and you can view various amateur productions or at least note the titles of those you can't get to. But an excellent source that is easy to overlook is the students themselves. A girl who was writing a paper on Edna St. Vincent Millay suggested *Aria de Capo*. We performed this jewel of a poetic drama in the round in our social room. The play stimulated, among students and faculty, an exciting discussion of the play's anti-war theme. Another student recommended Jean Giraudoux's *The Apollo of Bellac*, a charming bit of Gallic wit, which provokes thoughts about the role of the female.

The important thing is that the play have merit. For one thing good plays are easier to direct. The dialogue is memorable and

the movements are inherent in the script. Let "Arron Slick" go back to "Pumkin Crick" and "Wildcat Willie" see a "Psychiatrist." It is far better to welcome *Pygmalion* or *Sabrina Fair* or *The Imaginary Invalid*. It is far better to hear your young actors joking in iambic pentameter and to know that some of the greatest lines of all literature will be deeply engrained on their consciousness.

### Organizing and Coaching Debate

By ROBERT M. HEALEY

*Gage Park High School*

Near the end of May, 1961, twenty-four students representing six Chicago high schools will meet at Gage Park High School to participate in a stimulating competition based on skills important to all teachers of English. On the same day a similar competition will be taking place at Morgan Park High School.

The forty-eight students will test their skills in using the library, reading magazine articles and books on serious questions, taking notes, organizing facts and opinions, defining terms, and evaluating evidence. They will, as well, learn to reason logically and to speak clearly, forcefully, and courteously. They will be doing all this on their own time; and, I can safely predict on the basis of two years' experience, they will be enjoying themselves.

Have the twelve teachers who sponsor this competition done anything new or unusual? No, they have simply organized the South Side Debate League of Chicago. I should like to discuss first the organization of this group and second to touch briefly on the value of debate to the classroom teacher.

Our present league of twelve schools is divided into two sections. Each section holds two tournaments a semester, and the two schools with the best sectional records compete in a championship debate, to which all schools are invited. Excluding the championship debate, each school participates in eight inter-school debates on a topic chosen at the beginning of each semester by the debate sponsors. The sponsors take turns in assuming the chairmanship of the league. Each one is responsible for organizing his own club.

At our meetings at Gage Park we concentrate primarily on contest debating, which involves work in the analysis of the proposition, oral presentation, and listening. Research is done as outside work. We attempt through discussion to discover all the basic issues involved in any topic, and through research to strive



toward our ideal, which is never to hear from our opponents an argument about which we have not already read.

As for presentation, the hardest job is to convince the beginning debater that speaking extemporaneously from an outline is the most effective method of communication. To develop skill in this method and to show the importance of listening, we make great use of practice debates on single issues with the students using no notes. A variation of this procedure is to have a student attempt to answer all questions on the topic put to him by various members of the club. The rule for this game is simple: state clearly what you believe *and* give the evidence you have for believing it. Contest debating, of course, is a specialized activity, but debate has value beyond this application.

With some trepidation, I should like to introduce two terms into a brief discussion of the value of debate: method, because it is sometimes overlooked that debate is basically a teaching method; and motivation, because it is one of the main reasons for using this particular method.

Generalizing from my own experiences, I should suggest that one of the most serious delusions a high school teacher must overcome is thinking a particular area of subject matter by its very nature, its beauty, or its importance will engender the enthusiastic, active, intellectual participation from the student which the teacher believes is essential to learning. The value of debate as a method is that it is appropriate to various subjects; it demands active participation, and students like its competitive character. Also, and I hope this doesn't sound too devious, the teacher can introduce slowly and painlessly as many of the skills mentioned in the opening paragraph—library research for example—as he feels appropriate to the occasion.

All people have opinions. Sometimes the less they know the more vociferous are their opinions; high school students are no exception. Their opinions may not have a sound basis, they may not be logically thought out, they may not center around momentous issues; but, if students feel safe, they will express their opinions with vigor and enthusiasm. The job of the teacher is to give direction.

An illustration may make clear how this can be done. Begin with a series of discussions on subject familiar to the students; for example, "Should High School Students Go Steady." Have prepared in advance a bibliography of magazine articles on the topic. When you get a definite clash in the discussion between at least two students, introduce the idea of a debate. Each student can be given

five minutes to give his views plus the ideas he gathers from reading one article. The idea of rebuttal may be introduced, but none of the formalities of debate procedure need be discussed. If your students are well matched, you will have a good informal debate, and the basic technique will be established. From this point it is but a step to using the method for more serious issues. Imagine the debate that could develop out of a discussion of E. M. Forester's "The Machine Stops." I hope you try it.

### A Creative Writing Anthology

By RITA ELLEN HANSEN

*Taft High School*

To foster creative writing and to acknowledge talented students and skillful teachers, Mrs. Evelyn Carlson, assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum for the Chicago Public Schools, suggested that a city-wide anthology of student writing be prepared. English teachers in all schools responded enthusiastically when asked to submit student manuscripts.

The teachers knew that such a publication would bring welcome recognition to young authors and provide inspiration for other students. They were aware also that through the anthology they could share one of the delights of their profession—the sense of achievement which comes when a student captures a moment of beauty, a depth of understanding, or a ripple of laughter. Every English teacher has known the rare pleasure when, in the midst of marking prosaic papers, she discovers an essay, a poem—sometimes only a line—that sparkles with wonder, wisdom, or wit. At such a moment few teachers can resist rushing to the nearest person and exclaiming "Listen to this!"

From Chicago's fifty-two high schools, manuscripts poured in. Most English departments had difficulty in selecting only the three requested entries; many sent entire literary publications; every school sent something, something worthwhile. At the Department of Curriculum, the two English consultants, former English teachers, sorted the manuscripts according to districts. (For administrative purposes Chicago schools are divided into twenty geographical districts.)

Then four English teachers from widely separated sections of the city were asked to help "get out the book." At the first meeting the quality and the size of the book were discussed. Before opening any of the twenty bulging folders, members of the committee agreed that the anthology should include creative writing

from every district; it should speak of the experiences and dreams of the many, not just the artistry of the few.

Each teacher first studied the manuscripts from a district away from her home school. She read through each school's manuscripts, thought about them, re-read them, picked out what she thought best, set aside others for further consideration. Then she passed her folder on to the next teacher, who followed the same procedure. At least two teachers read each manuscript; all the teachers read the accepted manuscripts. Finally they compared reactions and did what English teachers are forever doing—they graded students' work.

After this first day of editing they had stacks of papers as evidence that hundreds of Chicago students use their language as an efficient tool of self-expression. Students had written with vigor and originality. Subject matter ranged from light-hearted limericks to critical essays. Moreover, the writing reflected the entire span of adolescence, from the eager childlike freshman to the searching, brink-of-manhood senior. Some students wrote so well that their voices deserved to be heard more than once in the anthology.

At the second meeting, the editor-teachers turned to their next problem, the organization of the material into a unified whole. After a brain-storming session they agreed that the writing reflected a general theme: *A Student Experiences Life*.

He grows up.  
He examines the world around him.  
He meets many kinds of people.  
He laughs.  
He appreciates beauty.  
He examines the arts.  
He wonders.  
He loves his country.  
He awaits the future.

These, then, became the chapter headings which tied together the students' writing and completed the teachers' assignment of selecting material for the first Chicago high school anthology.

Now students in high school art classes are preparing illustrations. This art work, like the creative writing, will be the work of students throughout the city. High school artists from all twenty districts will see their work presented in the anthology.

Publication date and distribution plans will be announced soon. No one will await publication more eagerly than the committee who shared in selecting the material. These teachers believe the anthology will show that the Chicago public high school writer has grasped his many opportunities for creative growth.







